

FAKE PERFIN

by the Catalogue Editor.

Of late there has considerable talk about fake perfins, so I thought that as Catalogue Editor it was my place to assure members that they are few and far between and to give some hints as to how to identify them.

I define fakes as stamps, mint or used, which have been perfined other than in the normal course of events. Some have been perfined using reproductions of the original perfin die and some have been perfined with the original die in unauthorised hands.

In avoiding them the collector's first line of defence is the value of the unperfined stamp. In practically every case the unperfined stamp is considerably more valuable than the perfined one so it is not reasonable to manufacture fakes, and collectors can purchase perfins in this class safely. In some cases however the perfins command a premium so we must beware. Examples of the latter case occur in "Officials" which are sought after by collectors and consequently worth faking. The Board of Trade "crown over B. T" and the Canadian five-hole OH/MS are cases in point. Also take care in buying common stamps which are unusual in the perfined state, i.e. recent GB commemoratives and very high face value issues.

If a stamp is of one of the suspect types as indicated above how can the fake be separated from the genuine? On used examples the postmark may help. Is it of the correct type and date? Is it from a reasonable location? The stamp may be datable and if so was the user in existence and using perfins? The physical condition may help. The perfin pin lifts the edge of the hole at the back and often leaves the punched paper attached or torn edges standing proud. (Look at a perfined mint stamp from the back of the perfin with a magnifying glass to see what I mean). When the stamp is stuck down and floated off the condition changes (look at known genuine used items). The faked used item, perfined after use, shows the characteristics of a mint perfin - reject it.

There are very few fakes about so do not worry, but if you do find one send it back to the seller (who may have obtained it innocently from elsewhere). If you are in doubt about an item send it to an experienced collector for an opinion.
